

## Stranger Changes by rainydayworks, Twilightrider

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Alternate Universe, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Alternate Universe - Vampire, Angst, Barb Lives, F/F, Graphic Description of Corpses, Non-Consensual Blood Drinking, it's only in a dream sequence I promise, no one dies

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Barbara "Barb" Holland, Mrs Holland, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington (Mentioned)

**Relationships:** Barbara "Barb" Holland & Nancy Wheeler, Barbara "Barb" Holland/Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler (mentioned)

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**Summary:**

The Demogorgon wasn't trying to kill Will and Barb in the Upside Down.

It was trying to keep them in.

This is the consequence.

(Stranger Things AU wherein exposure to the Upside Down changed Barb and Will more than anyone thought)

Barb-centric.

## Stranger Changes

### Author's Note:

Holy god damn, this is over 5k. When I first started writing this to Kit it was just an idea. Man am I glad it panned out.

Seriously a special thanks to rainydayworks, my friend whom both beta'd this and added a little bit of her own writing.

The door is slammed shut behind her, the sound echoing throughout the empty house. Barb's mother is outside, still retrieving her purse from the backseat of the car. The house lights cast a shadow on her in the doorway, her mother having rushed straight to the hospital after she had been found. No time to turn off the lights, she supposes.

The air is different now, she feels different, now.

Running a hand through her copper hair, Barb takes the small reprieve from her mother to take in the sight of the home she had left a week ago. She walks softly as she tours through the house, the lack of filth and grime feeling foreign to her. There had been no sense of day or night in the Upside Down, she had felt trapped by that *thing* for much longer than it was. She recalls being guided out by Joyce, who she vaguely remembered being Jonathan's mother, and Chief Hopper. The time between being in the Upside Down and being taken to the hospital is a blurr.

Her first clear memory is of Nancy bursting into her hospital room, tears rolling down her face. She remembers the pressure from Nancy throwing herself onto her. Being hugged so tightly, feeling the warmth from Nancy's arms made it all worthwhile.

The sound of the front door shutting pushes her thoughts back into the past. The edges of her lips perk up into a small smile, her mother is standing there, relief and love clear on her face. Barb strides into her mother's arms, burying her face into her mother's shoulder. Daughter and mother embrace in the entrance to their home, both

happy to be safe and sound.

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Later in the night, Barb's body burns with need.

Blearily she moves from her bed, the old frame creaking as she stumbles off it. She claws at her throat, soft gasps of pain mix with ragged breathing as her lungs burn. Subconsciously, she sniffs the air. The house is empty aside from Barb, her mother having had to deal with more medical documentation from the government and leaving before she went to bed. A mysterious sweet, succulent smell fills her nostrils. The scent wafts from downstairs.

Barb's mind starts to shut down, her instincts fully taking over as she stumbles towards the scent with a purpose. A sound between a growl and a whine licks her throat, the burning increasing as she descends the stairs towards the mysteriously sweet scent. Entering the kitchen, the burning becomes unbearable as she opens the fridge and desperately searches for the source of the scent. Her eyes sort through the food quickly, shifting them to the bottom she finds it. A raw, uncooked steak lays in it's packaging. Desperately tearing into the package, the meat is taken hold of and the packaging discarded. Her mouth waters as she plunges her teeth into the meat, sucking as much blood from it as possible.

The blood tastes bland, wrong, but it soothes her throat as it slides down. Barb grunts as she tears further into the meat, the burning having subsided after the first two gulps, but her body still craving more. The steak is ripped as she drains it dry. She gasps, a moan escaping her as the burning in her throat is quenched.

With barely any mind left in her, her body moves automatically as she throws out the steak and the packaging. Her thoughts are blank as her body moves back upstairs for rest.

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Barb sits up in her bed with a start, a bead of sweat running down her temple. Her hands roam the bed before beginning to pat over her body, confirming that she was home. With a loud sigh she fell back

into her pillow, recalling the dream that had startled her awake.

She was back in the Upside Down, she was alone again. Running through the distorted, dark version of her town. A loud roar echoing through the empty space, reverberating deep in her chest. She began to run in familiar territory, a different version of a neighborhood she'd been in before. A panicked search began, her head whipping up and down the street as she looked for a haven. She found it, running up to the door of the alternate version of her best friend's house. Slamming against it and bursting in, calling for help. Pounding up the stairway, but before she could get to the top step something wrapped around her ankle and yanked her back.

And that is when she woke up, her arms threw themselves over her eyes. Keeping them covered from the small amount of sunlight that came in through the window. Reluctantly she looked over at the clock that sat on her bedside table, red numbers told her that her alarm would be going off in about-

The shrill beeping that exited the machine made her head throb, grumbling angrily as she reached over and slammed her finger to the snooze button. The clock beeped again loudly before finally shutting off, a satisfied groan coming from her as she lazily swung her legs over the side of the bed. Hesitantly placing her feet to the carpet, once she stands she checks under her bed, making sure nothing is lurking there.

A harsh breath escapes her as sudden knocking startles her from her thoughts, "Barbara! I know it may seem early, but you should really go to school." It was her mother's voice that called from the other side, she rubbed at her sleep crusted eyes, nodding to nothing. "Yes mom, I'm up." She heard footsteps walk away from her room, her eyes moving from the still closed door to her mirror. A yelp escaped her, jumping back slightly. She shook her head and looked back into the mirror. Odd, she could have sworn her eyes were...glowing for a moment.

With a roll of her shoulders she just shook it off, preparing herself for the school day.

Upon entering the school she began to search for a familiar face,

Nancy's face. She saw her standing at her locker, a wide smile growing on her face as she began to approach. Her pace halting to a stop once she saw who she was with, Steve, Barb never cared for Steve. She always had a feeling deep down that he was a slimeball, just trying to get in Nancy's pants. And her anger towards him soared once Nancy told her that he didn't seem as concerned as he possibly should have been when told that his girlfriend's best friend was missing.

Her lips pulled back, a scowl set firmly on her face as she watched the two interact. Something was wrong, she knew she was a protective friend, but the sudden urge to bash Steve's stupid face into the locker was a bit too protective. Her expression softened when she saw Nancy's focus turn towards her, a wide smile filling the girl's face before she basically ran over. Slamming into Barb with such ferocity that normally it would knock the red-head to the floor, but she easily accepted the impact.

"Barb! You actually came to school today!"

"Well yeah, can't miss the Chemistry test. My mom would kill me Nance."

Both girls laughed, holding onto each other tightly. Barb smile had widened, grinning from ear to ear. She glanced from Nancy back to where Steve was, a triumphant glint in her eyes and a voice in her head growling out.

"Watch out Harrington."

After another moment of their tight hugging Nancy pulled back, smiling wide up at her best friend. It was good to have her back, and now all this stupid supernatural, Upside Down, Demogorgon shit would be put behind them. The bell chimed through the hallways, alerting the students that first period class would be starting. Nancy's head turned to look back at where she just was, nodding to Steve telling him that he could head to class. She then turned back to Barb and looped their arms together, "C'mon, there's a whole school day ahead of us and I have a lot of stuff to catch you up on."

The same bell rang, signaling the end of the school day. Barb and

Nancy walked out of their class laughing, “Right! Isn’t that such a stupid way to-”

“Nancy!” It was Steve, he jogged up to the two and Nancy instantly went to him, hugging him tightly with a giggle. Barb felt something sickening jump in her chest, it was anger but it was worse than anger. Something dangerous... jealousy, it was jealousy. Nancy turned to look back at Barb, smiling softly and giving a small wave.

“I’ll see you tomorrow Barb!”

“Yeah, I’ll catch you later Nance.”

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Barb’s mother watches her from the other side of the table as she does her homework.

It feels a bit awkward to say the least, but the relief still flooding her mother’s eyes stops her from saying anything. She diligently finishes the last question she had for History homework, the last subject of the night. Tired from working on catching up on her subjects, Barb leans back in her chair and stretches. Her body feels stiff from the limited movement she’s had in the last two hours.

“Barbara?” Her mother calls, it’s a gentle sound. One that takes Barb a minute to realize was directed at her.

“Huh?” Barb takes off her glasses, realizing how dirty they are as she looks at her mom. “Yeah mom?” She cleans them using the hem of her shirt, bringing them back up to her face. She barely notices the change as she puts them on again. Her mother smiles at her from across the table, her posture relaxed and relieved.

“I just wanted to say how happy I am that you’re safe again,” her mother’s expression shifts slightly, seriousness accented by a change in her tone of voice. “You’re such a strong kid Barb, and I love you. I can’t imagine how it was, being kidnapped, but you don’t have to handle everyone on your own, if you ever need support--” She’s cut off by the scraping of Barb’s chair along the kitchen floor. Barb begins packing up her school work, organizing it for tomorrow.

“Hey mom,” Barb says with a winning smile “I’m fine, I promise.”

Her mother frowns, her face pensive and worried. “Are you sure? You would tell me if anything was wrong, wouldn’t you honey?”

Barb nods, her smile still in place. She thinks back to last night, the dream of the Upside Down still fresh in her mind. The feeling of terror, the rush of adrenaline pumping through her veins as she ran from shadow, the comfort she felt as she was swallowed whole by the darkness-- “I will mom, don’t worry. I promise I’ll tell you if anything is wrong. Deal?”

Reluctantly, unbelieving but not wanting to pressure Barb, she agrees. “Deal.”

Barb gives her mom a wave as she heads out of the kitchen to her bedroom. “Thanks mom, I’m heading to bed.”

Her mother waves back. “Goodnight Barbara, sleep well alright honey?”

Barb laughs a bit for her mother, trying to deflect from the uneasiness she’s feeling inside.

“I will!” She replies, heading up the stairs.

Halfway up, she adds as an afterthought “Goodnight mom! I’ll see you tomorrow.”

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Barb doesn’t remember falling asleep.

Her body feels heavy as she trudges through the landscape of her dream version of the Upside Down once again. The sludge and dirt cling to her as she wades through the distorted version of her home town. To her right she spies her home, broken and torn as the walls are caked with cracks and scratch marks.

She vaguely remembers the weight of fear she had experienced yesterday, the feeling of terror seemingly becoming more foreign as she is left alone with her thoughts. She wanders from house to house, gazing upon the distorted and broken houses with a feeling of

fondness as she remembers taking refuge in them during her own time in the real Upside-Down.

Her wandering takes her many directions, taking her by many areas known to her. She spies the school in which she attends, Nancy's house, the local supermarket. Each sets a feeling of contentment through her, Nancy and memories of her filling the spaces.

She passes by Steve Harrington's house, her memories of Nancy guiding her there. Anger fills her being as her disdain for Steve is multiplied. The pool in the back is filled with blood, a grim reminder to Barb of her abduction. Subconsciously, she lifts her lips from her teeth, baring them towards the pool. Bubbles rise to the top in the center, Barb watches, anger still coursing through her as well as curiosity.

A body rises to the surface, scratch marks and bite marks littering its skin. Half of its face is torn off, leaving the muscle and tendons exposed to the surface air. Barb's gaze lingers on the corpse, it doesn't waver even as she realizes the identity of the body. Even with half of his face torn off, Barb recognizes the face of one resident asshole Steve Harrington.

Laughter bubbles up in her throat, followed by satisfaction. She wants to strangle the dead body, bite into him, rip him to pieces, bring his mutilated body to Nancy like a prize, almost like how a cat would bring a kill to their owner. Wouldn't she be surprised, happy even? Maybe she would-

--The heat in her chest is unbearable. She sits up, her body on autopilot as the thirst, the hunger, burns away all rational thought in her mind. A growl rips from her throat, her chest rumbling. A beautiful scent is in the air, faint, but there. It's on Barb's clothes, washed into them. She needs to follow the scent. She needs it, more than she has anything before. She opens her window, dropping down from it. The height should have killed her, at least injured her but nothing happens.

In the night Barb walks, the beast inside of her overtaking her with every step she takes.



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Nancy hums to herself softly as she lazily sorts through her study notes. The night is quiet, in her mind, Nancy thanks whatever God is out there for the reprieve of all the weird bullshit having gone on in her life recently. *It's nice*, Nancy thinks to herself as she puts her study notes down, *only being stressed about school, and not any of this supernatural shit.*

Deciding it's time for bed, Nancy reaches over to her right to turn off her lamp. Before she is able to, she hears the distinct sound of the window sliding open from the outside. She's on high alert as she whips her head to the side, her gaze landing on the figure coming through the window for but a moment, discovering that the person is--

"Barb!?" Her eyes are wide, confusion clear on her face. Barb's distinct short copper hair being the first indication of who the intruder was.

"What are you doing--" Nancy cuts herself off mid sentence as Barb lifts her head. In the light of the room, Barb's eyes glow an eerie red, her teeth sharp and threatening, her canines like fangs. A scream lodges in her throat, her brain not comprehending that the creature in front of her is Barb.

Nancy leaps from her bed, pure instinct driving her to do so. Barb snarls from her position at the window, the cold wind from the late night chilling the room. Her mind switches to survival mode, slowly she backs herself against the wall with her door. Her heart tries to catch up with her brain, thudding against her ribcage as her thoughts went wild. Dread flooding her body as she watched her...the thing, disguised as her friend.

Barb visibly sniffs the air, her nostrils flaring as the scent permeating the room is so thick she can practically taste it. Nancy gulps down, her eyes scanning the room for any weapons to use, a wooden bat sitting beside her bed. She began shifting back towards Barb every second, terrified for what will happen.

Barb suddenly leaps forward, almost teleporting directly in front of

Nancy. Nancy feels Barb's hot breath against her face, the growling from Barb's throat gets deeper as Nancy's fear increases.

Nancy takes a deep breath and pushes Barb away from her. Her eyes catch the bat at the foot of the bed. She dives for it, managing to grab hold of it just in time for Barb to re-centre herself and attempt to get close to Nancy again.

Nancy breathes deeply, the bat feeling heavy in her hands. Barb stalks forward. Her thoughts are shut down, her body running on instinct. The deep hunger within her claws at her throat, the beast within screaming for Nancy and Nancy's blood.

Nancy brings the bat up, terrified out of her mind as she prepares to defend herself against Barb. As Barb attempts to grab Nancy, she swings with all her might, unable to think before she does so, she swings the bat directly into the side of Barb's head. With a sickening crack, Barb falls to her side. Her head split open, blood seeping from the wound. A low groan is heard, followed by a snarl as Barb gets up. She looks around the room and doesn't see Nancy, the blow temporarily stunned her senses. She growls again, louder this time. She lifts her nose up, sniffing out Nancy's scent. Her eyes narrowing on the still open window, in the distance she sees Nancy sprinting away. Her hands grip the window ledge and dig into the sill. The wood cracks under her grip, splinters lodging themselves in her skin as she launches herself from Nancy's room, beastly instinct leading her towards her mate.

It's dark in the woods, the inkiness of night covering the area. Tree branches blocking out the moon, Nancy can barely see as she sprints, anywhere, far away from the creature that looks like her best friend. She really should have thought this through, the thought finally popping into her head as she continues fleeing. Her heart is pounding, adrenaline pumping throughout her body, senses heightened. She spots a shadow in the corner of her eye, it approaches faster than she can outrun. Her mind is fuzzy and unfocused but she just knows it's Barb. The bat is held within her right hand as she runs, swinging lazily in momentum with her pumping arms. She glances back briefly, for just one moment, suddenly the shadow is upon her and tackles her to the ground. They roll on the forest floor, down a small hill, stopping short of a rotted

out stump. Leaves littering their clothes and sticks tangled in their hair. Nancy is winded, the air sucked out of her lungs from being tackled.

Barb peers down from above her. Her mouth salivating as her mate and mate's blood is so close, drool dripping from her razor sharp fangs. Her wound on her head continues to drip deep red blood, so dark it almost seems black. The drops fall on Nancy's shirt, making a splattered design sprout in the fabric. The fear Nancy feels is nothing like she has felt before, the words to describe it flitting from her vocabulary. The bat lies a few feet away, just out of reach at Nancy's feet. Tears prick at her eyes as Barb bares her terrifyingly sharp fangs. A sob escapes her throat as Barb presses her bloody forehead against her own. A single moment of silence passes as Barb takes in Nancy's scent. Nancy lays beneath her, trying to hold back her sobs and failing. Her heart thumping against her rib cage like a terrified bird, even fighting the Demogorgon so closely wasn't as terrifying. Tears flow freely from her eyes as the real possibility of being killed by her best friend enters her mind.

Barb growls once again, loud. The sound vibrates throughout Barb's being. She nuzzles her face into Nancy's neck as he temptation to claim her mate becomes too much. "Mine." Is all Nancy hears, the rough sound pushing down on her ears, deep and yet still sounding like Barb. She feels sharp teeth plunge into her throat, a scream rips from her mouth, full of pain and terror as she is locked in place. Her eyes desperately search the surrounding area, looking for anything to focus on except the being above her.

The teeth are in her throat for less than 5 seconds before they are pulled out once again, yet it felt like an eternity. Tears freely flow down her cheeks as her sobs wrack her whole body. Barb stares down from above her, the wound on her head seemingly healed already. Nancy cries as she attempts to push Barb away, the beast gazing down upon her with nothing close to human in its eyes. Nancy tries punching Barb, the strikes having no effect against her. A low rumble of content vibrates through Barb as she quickly grips Nancy's wrists within her hands. The beast is satisfied as Barb pins Nancy's hands to the side, gently nuzzling into Nancy's neck, purring as the beast is satisfied and her mind slowly returns to her. Nancy looks away,

unable to look at the beast in her friend's body.

It takes a few minutes, but Barb's mind slowly returns to her as her instincts are overtaken by rational thought. Barb feels like she just woke up from a long nap as she blinks, the surrounding area looking nothing like her bedroom. In her arms, she looks down to see Nancy crying, looking away from her. Confusion fills her mind as she sits up. She finds that she is straddling Nancy, the position confusing her and embarrassing her immensely, cheeks flushed a soft red. Quickly rolling herself off of her friend to save them both the embarrassment, crossing her legs underneath her. She takes a deep breath to steady herself and looks to Nancy again, she gently reaches out a hand towards her friend. "Nancy?" She says quietly, the uneasy feeling in her gut giving her pause. "Nance?" She calls out again after no response, Nancy still refusing to look at her. Hurt starts to course through Barb's body, adding to her confused state.

That is suddenly replaced by guilt, not sure where the feeling comes from as she gazes around the forest. Nancy continues to cry silently to her left, causing the guilt to drop like a brick into her stomach. Barb curls into herself, bringing her legs to her chest as Nancy seems to do the same, holding onto herself. The two stay like that for a few moments.

Movement catches Barb's attention. Nancy is trying to calm herself down, wiping her tears with her arms and taking deep breathes. Barb watched closely, the guilt lingering heavy in her stomach. Nancy digs her fingers into the forest floor, dirt collecting under her fingernails as she tries to hold herself together. Barb watches in silence, not knowing what is going on, what happened, or why Nancy isn't talking to her.

The two sit there in silence. Both wracking their brains for what happened, and why.

The silence becomes too much after neither of them moving for five minutes. Barb reaches out her left hand for Nancy, causing her to recoil at the movement, whipping her head towards Barb and snatching her arm away. Fear clouding her mind, terror visible on her face as she dreads the thought of Barb not being done with her. Barb feels her guilt and even her own fear increase tenfold as she sees how terrified her friend is. She moves her hand back to her legs quickly.

"S-Sorry..." Barb manages out, her voice low and apologetic. Nancy focuses on the softness of her voice, relief flooding her as she gazes upon Barb's face and finds that she no longer has glowing eyes or sharp teeth.

"Barb?" She manages to get out, her voice scratchy and strained from the crying. "Are... Are you, you again?"

Barb furrows her eyebrows, the motion hardly seen with the darkness that surrounds them. "I--" her confusion now obvious on her face at Nancy's question, what did she mean by that? "Nance, I don't--- I can't remember anything." She shifts slightly, into a more comfortable position to face Nancy. "The last thing I remember is going to bed and feeling this... This burning, like... I was hungry." Barb ends off, unsure of, everything.

Nancy takes a deep breath, clenching her fist within the dirt once more before relaxing her grip. "Oh." She looks away, suspecting what Barb was hungry for. She tries to look at the wound on her neck, the dried blood having dripped down her shoulder. Taking her left hand out of the dirt, she wipes it on her pants as best she can to clean it. Slowly she reaches up to touch the wound. Much to her surprise, she only finds the faint outline and raised tissue of a scar, covered in flaking dried blood.

Barb watches her intently, even with her limited eyesight she can see Nancy touch something on her neck. She clears her throat, unable to bare the tension in the air. "Nance," her voice turns soft as she realizes it was her behaviour that caused Nancy this distress. "Nance, what did I do?" The question lingers in the cool air as Nancy gathers her thoughts together.

"You, scared me." She decides on that for a response. Her brain logically telling her that Barb would never hurt her on purpose, but her body unable to shake the uneasiness she feels around her friend right now.

"I--. What did I do?" Barb asks carefully, something in the back of her mind knows, but she can't help but hope it's wrong, and that Nancy could tell her that it was wrong.

Nancy finally focuses her eyes on Barb. She tries to stare into her eyes, searching for any sign of danger, anything that isn't her friend. She doesn't find it, her tense shoulders relaxing and a loud exhale from her mouth signals her reluctance to reply, yet her acceptance to do so as well.

"You came to my house," Nancy starts out, running her right hand through her hair, fingers catching in tangles and pulling out forest debris. "And you were..." She takes a moment to gather her thoughts. "You were weird looking, and just... Weird in general."

Barb furrows her brows in confusion, her question soft. "Weird how?"

Nancy gulps and stares into Barb's eyes. "Your eyes... They were glowing? Red, and your teeth..." Nancy shivers at thought of it, remembering how terrifying Barb looked, perching on her windowsill. Barb's eyes widened, it sounded crazy. Something she would shoot down with logic if she hadn't been the one sitting here right now.

"What? Nance, how--"

"I don't know how!" Barb recoils slightly at Nancy's outburst.

"Okay I'm sorry, I-- I-- I'm sorry Nance." Barb watches as Nancy trembles slightly, a fresh wave of fear rolling in the pit of her stomach. Barb grimaces as she watches Nancy get herself under control once more, the guilt within her rising once again. A tiny voice in the back of Barb's mind whimpers at the pain Nancy is in. Barb's entire body tells her to go and comfort Nancy, but she resists the temptation, knowing that her comfort won't help Nancy right now.

Nancy clenches her fist tight, and shakes her head. Shaking her head to get her thoughts back on track. Glancing back up at Barb, seeing her confusion and fear, she resolves to pull herself together. "You came in my room," Nancy continues, "through the window. I'm not... Sure how you did it. I was up the entire time and I didn't-- I didn't hear anything until you opened my window."

Barb nods in understanding, indicating for Nancy to continue.

"I... You were, like, growling at me. It was deep and terrifying-- like an animal, Barb." Nancy grimaces at the memory. Barb is silent, her tongue seeming too big for her mouth, unable to form a coherent

sentence.

"You approached me like you were starving, your eyes--- they didn't, you didn't seem like yourself. You pinned me against the wall and I shoved you back, there was a bat at the foot of my bed and so I went for it and..." Barb lets out a small noise of discomfort, a throb in her forehead where her skull had been previously split open. "You came at me again-- I --I was so scared Barb I didn't think I just swung the bat and... You fell down. I went out the window and ran like hell. Into these woods...." A small nod from Barb told her to continue.

"You came up behind me, I'm not sure how. You were so fast and you just-- tackled me. Right to the ground. We rolled for a bit down that hill." Nancy points to the hill, her hand trembling as she does. "And you were on top of me. You were growling again and-- oh god" Nancy begins tearing up again. Her body trembling as she recalls the feeling of being helpless and the cold, rock hard forest floor pressing into her back. "You... You bit me."

She emphasizes her point by turning toward Barb, her shirt pulled down slightly by Nancy's hand. Now Barb can finally see what Nancy was examining earlier. There, on left side of Nancy's neck, is a large scar in the shape of teeth. Barb brings her left hand up to her mouth, shocked and unbelieving, before she reaches out to touch the mark with her right hand. Nancy recoils slightly, making Barb jerk her hand back, but reluctantly she stays still for Barb to investigate. Inside of her mind, her inner beast purred in approval at Nancy not shifting away completely.

Barb's hand touches raised, smooth skin, a small moan makes it way through her body as she touches the mating mark. Her eyes flicker red and her teeth extend slightly as her inner beast rumbles in satisfaction at the well done mark.

Nancy gasps and scrambles away, terror taking hold of her once again as she watches Barb's inhuman features show themselves once more, clearly on display despite the darkness.

Barb blinks as she watches Nancy scramble away, terrified for her life. She sniffs the air, the scent of the forest mixed with Nancy's scent smells delectable. Another scent however, Nancy's fear, is strong throughout the area. Barb clutches her head and whimpers as the smell of that fear fills her entire being, her beast roars in anger for

having scared their mate. Barb bites down on her tongue, blood pushing from her flesh and coating the muscle due to her now sharp fangs.

Taking Barb's moment of distraction, Nancy begins to run once again, leaving her spot on the forest floor empty as she sprints in what she believes to be the direction of her house. Coming back to her senses, Barb sniffs around and finds that Nancy had left once again. Unable to leave Nancy alone, in danger in the middle of the night she gives chase.

Nancy runs. She runs, and runs. The memory of doing the same not thirty minutes ago fresh in her mind.

Her heart pounds, the only thought running through her mind being 'get away from Barb'. Her mark throbs, causing small gasps of pain to escape her as she tries to focus on running. Once again her senses tune in, she feels someone approaching her back, goosebumps rising on her skin. She refuses to turn around this time, however she lets out a surprised screech as she runs directly into the arms of Barb. Almost as if teleporting, Barb was holding Nancy to her chest tight, her eyes still glowing red and teeth still sharp. She peers down at Nancy trying to escape her grasp, pushing and punching at her chest. She lets the girl go as Nancy pushes at her one final time, the two split apart and stare each other down. They're in a small clearing now, moonlight reflecting down on them as they stand their ground. Barb raises her hands in a surrendering motion. "Nance, it's okay, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you I didn't know that would happen I swear." Barb gulps down air, not entirely sure what is going on. Her only thoughts are of protecting Nancy, of making her feel safe and comfortable. "Nance I'm still me right now, I promise i won't hurt you." She tries to repeat her friend's name as much as she can, trying to prove that she was still there.

Nancy stares at Barb, terror still filling her entire being. "Barb? I..I can't.." Nancy mutters, her body aches from running. She's sick and tired of all this supernatural bullshit. She feels like she's aged another ten years in the past hour. "What are you..." Nancy's voice cracks, tears threatening to fall from her eyes again. "What happened to you? Why are you like," Nancy gestures towards Barb with her hands "this?" Her breaths come out ragged, the cold night air burns her



lungs.

Barb bites her lip, not entirely knowing what to say. She notices Nancy shivering now, the cold air finally affecting her body. "I don't know Nance. I really don't know. I feel... I feel different. I caught up to you-- I, I smelled you in the air-- your fear..." Barb trails off as silent tears fall from Nancy's eyes.

Nancy's cautious. She's done with this, done with all this supernatural, Upside Down bullshit and all the pain it causes. Only two days ago she had found Barb again, been terrified for what her friend could possibly be experiencing. She wants things to go back to how they were, how she and Barb were before all this. Earlier that day the two of them had been hanging out just fine, trying to come to terms with what happened. Now Nancy cries as Barb, whatever she is now, stands in front of her, inhuman and terrifying. Yet a small voice in the back of Nancy's mind whispers into her ear. It tells Nancy of how Barb will protect her, will comfort her, will keep her safe. How she is still her friend. She desperately wants to believe the voice, her body begs her to. Her mind has other ideas, as she forces herself to stare into Barb's eyes and demand "I want to go home Barb."

Barb nods and grimaces, knowing to keep her distance, but her body rejects the idea. She strides forward and waits expectantly for Nancy. Nancy closes her eyes briefly. "Barb, I want to go home *alone*."

The sentence pierced Barb's heart, a voice in the back of her head howling in agony. She wanted to let out those noises, but her lips tightened and she couldn't speak. Throat tightening and becoming dry, with a solemn nod she stepped away from Nancy. Finally finding her voice she croaked, "If..if you head that way you should get home in a few minutes." she gestured with her thumb in the direction she was talking about. Blinking and looking down, eyes still shimmering a soft red as she fought back tears. She didn't want to hurt her friend, her best friend, only friend. But she understood that Nancy needed room, a moment to breath, but she felt like all the air had been sucked from her body. Nancy wrapped her arms around herself and nodded, clearing her throat.

She walked past Barb, hesitating a moment before speaking "I'll, see you in school." With that she dashed off into the direction she was

pointed to. Chilled to the bone, and just ready to sleep this day off. Leaving Barb in the center of the clearing, the moonlight and the sound of chirping crickets as her only company.

### **Author's Note:**

I'm not sure if I'm going to write more of this AU, but there may be plans for future installments in this AU if I ever get around to writing them out.

On a side note, all the people that were sent in with hazmat suits (government workers, Joyce, Hopper), the Demogorgon DID try to/did kill. It realized they weren't changing and had to act accordingly.